



Growing Together through ALiVE

Assessment of Lifeskills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE)

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Introduction

In this brief we will outline what we have learned from the ALiVE programme about **how organisations grew** through their participation in ALiVE. This learning has been collected over the course of nearly two years of programme implementation and has been gathered and synthesised by the ALiVE team as we move forward into our next phase.

ALiVE is a 5-year collaboration between seven organisations in East Africa focusing on understanding, assessing and enhancing of life skills¹ and values. The evidence generated through the National Assessments hopes to: **i)** Generate interest of the various government education stakeholders to explore how best to enhance these competencies through enactment of policies. **ii)** Ignite a public conversation on the importance of enhancing these competences and the role of parents and communities in enhancing them.

We are now moving to the second phase of the projects where we explore the possibility of conducting classroom assessments through the various ministries of Education but also how we can use the evidence already generated to advocate for systemic change.

Goals for ALiVE



Develop **context-relevant, open-source tools** for assessing life skills and values in East Africa



Undertake a **household assessment** targeting adolescent (13-17 years) both in and out of school



Use the **evidence to draw attention** to and increase awareness



Enhance **peer learning and feedback** among the RELI member organizations

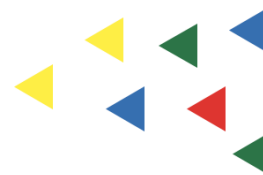
Achievements so Far

Tools developed for **Respect, problem solving, Self-Awareness** and **Collaboration**

National Household surveys carried out in **3** countries, reaching **46,000** adolescents

16 Papers published authored, **3** academic papers published, **10** blogs written, and **10** learnshops held

¹ Alternatively known as soft skills, core-competencies, non-cognitive and social emotional learning



Defining Organisational Growth

Organisations grow when they increase their knowledge and skills, collaborate, extend their work arena, and improve their programming.

- ▶ Increase knowledge and skills
- ▶ Collaborate
- ▶ Improvements in terms of processes, publicity, programming
- ▶ Extend work arena by working with other organisations, locally, regionally and globally

For ALiVE, organisational growth can be defined by the magnitude of learning that has taken place in the journey so far. Through regional collaboration for tool development and contextualisation of life skills and values, we grew as a network and as organisations. Every aspect of the ALiVE process contributed to our organisational growth from increasing our technical skills to learning how to work together online and regionally. The whole process enabled us to see where our synergies are, work together to nurture those synergies, and flourish as a network. We created ALiVE together, so we grew together.

Organisations that have been in the ALiVE journey have been able to identify the gaps that existed in their day-to-day work when it comes to nurturing and assessing life skills. As the result, these organisations shared that growth happened when they were able not only to identify these gaps in their work, but also when they were able to gain knowledge to close those gaps. Some examples of knowledge growth include ability to understand life skills from how they are constructed, this allowed the nurturing to be more specific and more effective. Also, other organisations shared that they were able to go further and use ALiVE processes to create tools to measure other skills that weren't part of the ALiVE project.

Apart from knowledge, organisations shared that, increased in network of actors who work on values and life skills allowed them to learn from one another and hence grow their organisations. This network enhanced expansion of other organisations work.

Key Lessons on Organisational Growth

1

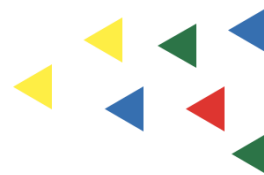


Learning from each other is key

The exchange of expertise between members of the network filled gaps in knowledge about assessment of life skills and values. Members within the ALiVE network came with different experiences, perspectives and competencies that complemented those of other members. Through the building of relationships within the network, members learned from the extensive variety of expertise available which fostered individual and organisational learning.

Different ways of working together enabled a culture of learning. The ALiVE process was interrupted by the pandemic, but members adapted, optimizing online learning platforms to continue to learn and work together. The online collaboration has made a critical contribution to making learning accessible globally and facilitating regional linkages. Online sessions such as Learnshops, which were open webinar style events focused on specific topics, and online meetings of the RELI Values and Lifeskills (VaLi) working group allowed for ALiVE members to update one another on their country-specific approaches and experiences and discuss common ground. The sessions nurtured a culture of learning within our collaborative network.

ALiVE learned from global perspectives on tool development but ensured a contextual focus. A global facilitator shared global best practices around assessment which enabled organisations to align their national frameworks with global frameworks.

**2**

Organisations flourish in unique ways through collaboration towards a common goal

The ALiVE process fostered organisations' growth in unique and diverse ways.

Learning to assess life skills and values increased organisations' technical skills. This allowed each organisation to adapt their new knowledge and skills in assessment to their unique needs. For example, some organisations developed assessment tools using a similar process to that of ALiVE. Also, through embracing working in collaborative ways, even teamwork within individual organisations strengthened.

3

Learning arises from creating common yet contextualised definitions

The process of tool development and contextualisation gave us a deeper understanding of what life skills are in general and within our context. By reaching a common understanding of what life skills and values are in East Africa, we were

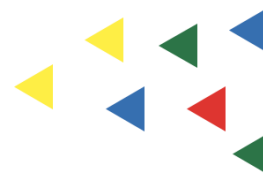
able to address the issue of life skills and values meaning different things to different people even within the same country. Once we had gained a common understanding, we adapted them to each of our specific contexts. This was important as we no longer wanted to rely on literature about assessment from different contexts, but rather we wanted to start from communities and their understanding of which lifeskills are important. Through our increased understanding, we were able to break down the life skills and values into meaningful parts.

4

Learning is an intentional and deliberate process

Key to capturing our learning as we continue the ALiVE journey is to make the learning intentional and deliberate. We learned the importance of documenting

learning from the beginning to feed into and inform our tool development and contextualisation processes. Learning must be intentional and deliberate, with a commitment to capturing it. Not only would lessons be useful to those directly participating in the process, but it would be useful for those who have not been participating. By sharing written reflections, or by sharing what we have learned through public engagements, we can support other organisations both in East Africa and further afield who are working on similar issues.



Where to from here?



Putting this into practice for ALiVE

How will we act on what we have learned? Through our reflection workshops we considered the following actions which we could prioritise in future programming:

- ▶ **Make learning more intentional and deliberate.** The ALiVE process was very intense and took a long time. The tool Development process involved learning and doing at the same time which made documentation of learning as an area that not much effort was set. Moving forward, members would like to put learning documentation as an intentional part of the journey that is done on a regular basis. This way ALiVE will not only benefit few people but rather become a thought leader in assessment of Life skills and Values
- ▶ **Focus on growth within the education systems.** During the next phase the ALiVE network would love to focus on how the assessment tools and results can be used in transforming education systems. Having data to influence policy is one thing that is at the centre of the ALiVE community but to get there, having systemic change in assessing values and life skills seem to be a more first step that can build into strengthening the policies. Moving forward the community would love to focus on influencing system changes.
- ▶ **Involve parents in the process so values and skills are nurtured more in communities.** The ALiVE process not only informed the level in which adolescents have values and life skills, it also sparked conversations from the household on what these skills are, how are they nurtured and assessed. During the large assessment, parent participated and it turned out that they play a key role in nurturing life skills and values at home. Moving forward, ALiVE community would love to bring on board parents as key stakeholders in its processes.



What do we still need to learn?

What questions remain unanswered? ALiVE is a programme that will always continue to learn, and we hope that some of these questions can be answered not just by us, but can be taken up by other researchers.

- ▶ How do we package learning to share with others who want to go through the same collaborative initiative?
- ▶ What skills do we focus on in the next phase of ALiVE to be more impactful and responsive to the need of each country?
- ▶ Who are the Key stakeholders and how do we bring them onboard in young ALiVE to be more effective? How can we ensure that they have opportunities to grow and learn through the process?
- ▶ How do we grow from household to classroom assessment? What will organisations need to learn to make this transition?
- ▶ How long can we train assessors to use the tool for assessment? Does the training we provide translate into their work on other projects or assessments?
- ▶ Are the kinds of competencies that we are growing across the ALiVE network needed in the region? How can we track the usefulness of our work for other organisations?